

**ABSTRACT for presentation on conference:**

**Hiding Making – Showing Creation**

**Strategies in Artistic Practice from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries**

**7-8.1.2011**

**Teylers Museum Haarlem & Rijksakademie Amsterdam**

## **14, Rue de La Rochefoucauld. The Partial Eclipse of Gustave Moreau.**

When the Parisian painter Gustave Moreau died in 1898, he bequeathed his house and its self-consciously arranged collections to the French state on condition that the collection's integral character be maintained. Opened in 1904 as the Musée Gustave Moreau, the house made public the life and *oeuvre* of a painter whose seclusion during his lifetime had become legendary. Linked to Moreau's habit of collecting and reworking his own work, the format of a personal and monographic museum emerged only in the last instance, and as a modification of an earlier planned retrospective exhibition. Moreau's strategic bequest envisioned the presentation of his work as a lifetime achievement, the posthumous evaluation of which would ultimately prove him a genius and recognize his contribution to the history of art.

The museographic format Moreau developed to this end is full of ambiguities that fit and yet complexify the pattern of 'hiding making, showing creation'. For instance, Moreau shows his creations, attempts at masterpieces that have the task of safeguarding his position in art history, but also an enormous archive of signed studies and sketches referring to the labor of learning and making. Further, the museum space he prepares at the end of his life is a set of museum galleries in the guise of a spacious painter's studio, which came to replace the small attic studio in which most of the work presented was actually made. This paper aims at interpreting Moreau's stakes in adopting such a partial eclipse, a midway position between 'hiding making' and 'showing creation'.

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